

# Canada #249

## Questions and Answers (maybe)

John Munro-Cape (#3897)

A couple of months ago a question was asked in one of the stamp magazines about the hidden dates on early Canadian stamps. The correspondent wanted to know when these started and mentioned that he/she had identified one in the late 1950's. My first impression was that this was a trivial sort of question (even I can go back to 1942). However, I almost immediately realized that this was one of those instances where no question is stupid or trivial, except those questions which never get asked. If this statement is more or less accepted, then is it possible to accept its reverse – every question that has been posed deserves an answer. I have always thought that the magazines and other journals produced for philatelists should have large question and answer sections in them.

I started my philatelic activities collecting ship stamps, a nice safe broad topical pursuit! This soon became too big, so I chopped it down in size by going to only Canadian ships; “every ship in the Unitrade catalogue and a few extra for good measure” (sailors, lighthouses, wrecks, etc.). This project also started to become much too big, so I chopped some more and took it down to one stamp – Scott or Unitrade Canada #249, the one cent war issue; again anything and everything to do with #249. Since the Canadian postal rates increased just after the war stamps were issued, it is possible to

find blocks of 4 and plate blocks, both mint, used and on cover. There are two types of coils; three types of booklets, etc., etc. So there is a lot of material available. And of course there are PERFINS!

For the purposes of my project there are two types of perfins; first the official OHMS types, O8 and O9, and second all of the private perfins. It would be very difficult to proceed without a copy of Conrad Tremblay's (#1786) checklist<sup>1</sup>, which has given me all of the perfins that exist on Canada #249. (It would be very useful if this checklist was included as one of the appendices in the Johnson and Thomasson catalogue<sup>2</sup> when it is reprinted.)

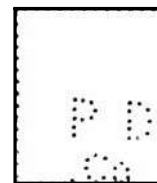
It appears that I'm searching for about 260 stamps of which I have nearly 200. There are also 6 perfinned precancels (or are they precancelled perfins?), an undetermined number of RPO's (Railway Post Office), and maybe some illegally used MPO's (Mobile Post Office) as well. The perfinned precancels are quite interesting because one of the firms involved purchased only precancelled stamps to perforate – there are no examples of plain perfinned stamps, only perfinned precancels. This is the J.B. Ford Sales Co. perfin on a Windsor Moon #4940 precancel.



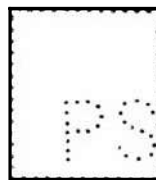
Canadian Northern Railways  
on Toronto Precancel



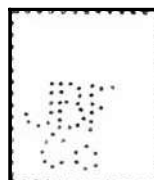
Canadian Pacific Railways  
on Winnipeg Precancel



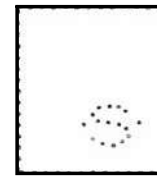
Parke, Davis & Co.  
on Windsor Precancel



Province of Saskatchewan  
on Regina Precancel



J.B. Ford Sales Co.  
on Windsor Precancel



Swift Canadian Co., Ltd.  
on Moose Jaw Precancel

This perfin was used only on  
precancelled stamps.

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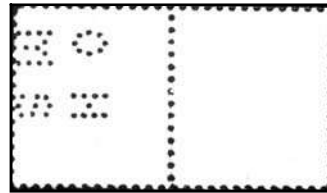
## Canada #249 (cont.)

The official perfin exist with the earlier 5-holes in the “M” and “H” (O8) perforated insignia and the more recent 4-hole (O9) varieties. Two different plates produced the 4-hole perfin. Although the plates were meant to be identical there are differences which are fairly easily distinguished.

The Wrigley 10<sup>th</sup> edition<sup>3</sup> makes no mention of the O8 and O9 plates. He catalogues our positions 2 and 4 for ten cents apiece and then lists 4 other positions

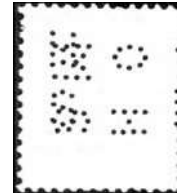
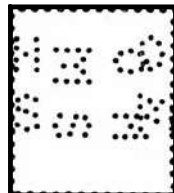
on #249 for prices up to \$40.00. The Tremblay checklist has positions 1, 3 and 7 listed. Does anybody have any of these varieties? I would appreciate a photocopy of them and/or the opportunity to purchase or trade. My contact information is at the end of this article.

The Wrigley Catalogue lists three examples of pairings of a #249 perfin and a blank – I have one of them as shown below.



I also have one situation in which a perforated sheet went back through the perforator in a different

orientation and another similar perfin where the plate was misaligned with the stamps.



Government employees seemed to be relatively careful in the way in which they pushed stamps through the perforator. Possibly the use of a 10 position perforator plate simplified the feeding-in process and there are, as mentioned, very few positional varieties associated with O8 and O9. One of the interesting features of the private perfin is the fact that they exist with lots of different positions.

What was going on in the mind of the mailroom staff when they ended up producing all 8 positions, as happens in the case of the Canadian General Electric Company shown below? It certainly feels as if this was done on purpose! I only have one example of this in my #249 perfin, but according to the Tremblay checklist, 7 positions occur with 4 different perfin!



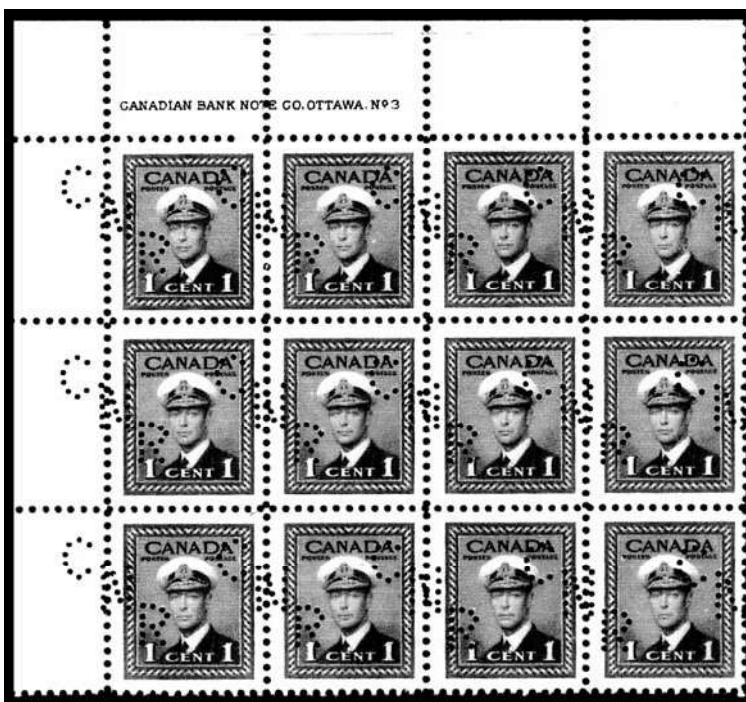
Canadian General Electric Company - Perfin in the eight positions

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## Canada #249 (cont.)

O8 and O9 perfins were sold to the general public who were admonished not to use them instead of ordinary postage stamps. It is to be expected that mint or unused official perfins should be common and found in most collections, both as singles and as multiples. I have a block of 80 O8. However since the purpose of the private perforations was to prevent theft by mailroom employees and consequential use

or sale of the pilfered stamp(s), mint private perfins shouldn't occur in collections, but they do. There are thieves out there! A block of 12 of C43 turned up recently and is more interesting because the plate information is still part of the block. Since there are five impressions shown, was this C43 perfin plate less than a full strike of 10? The copy of the C43 plate proof (not from this block) that I have shows only 8 impressions.



The next page shows a neat piece that appeared recently. It is a full strip of ten of the O9 perforator. If anybody has ever thought of doing some plating, then this becomes invaluable.

I have posed several questions that may seem trivial, however they are asked because I don't know the answers!

I am always on the lookout for #249 material and have some material for trade as well as sale. One of

my less successful ventures was to pick up some early European perfins in the hope of being able to trade for #249. I still own a lot of unwanted European perfins! I do wish that somebody would take them off my hands. There are about seven hundred of them so I'll trade ten of mine for one of the #249's that I am missing. If you have duplicate Canada #249 perfins, please contact me. My address is: John Munro-Cape, R.R. 3, Picton, Ontario K0K 2T0, CANADA or email me at [twofournine@kos.net](mailto:twofournine@kos.net).

### References:

1. Tremblay, Conrad, "Canadian Perfins Cancel Survey", *The Perforator*, February 2002, Vol. 23, No. 1, pages i-iv, 1-42.
2. Johnson, J.C. and Thomasson, G. Editors, *Canadian stamps with perforated initials*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, circa 1985.
3. Wrigley, Roy, *The catalogue and guidebook of Canadian official stamps*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition, circa 1980

## Canada #249 (cont.)

At right is the strip of 10 from the O9 perforator, reduced to 88% of the actual size to fit the page.

The sheet of stamps was fed through the perforator from the left hand side with the image upright.

This multiple, from the second perforator, shows clearly the symmetry of the “O” and the “S”. However, there are minute variations in the positioning of the pins in the left hand vertical of the “M” which identifies the row occupied by a stamp in a sheet.

The strip shows that the selvedge was removed and the bottom looks like field stock. It also shows that as the sheet was fed into the perforator, the image came out in position 2 or 4.

An interesting side note is that the second perforator plate was also used to perforate all 14 different stamps in the wartime issue. The large size, high-value stamps of the issue each received 2 impressions from the perforator, nearly always in the correct configuration.

[Editor's Note: The preceding article is based on a similar article that was originally published in the December 2008 issue of *The Perforator* (Volume 29, Number 1, Whole Number 129), the official publication of the BNA Perfins Study Group of the British North American Philatelic Society (BNAPS) and is used with their permission.]

